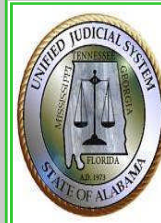




# AOC Newsletter



Volume 5 Issue 4 April 2010



## Court Budgets Cuts



By Robert Rygiel, Court Services & IT

A recent USA Today article begins "Unprecedented layoffs and courtroom closings across the country..." The remainder of the article is equally as bleak and explains that there is presently a crisis in the nation's courts. States throughout America have been forced to introduce difficult measures to adhere to grossly diminished budgets. Furloughs, layoffs, hiring freezes, court closures, raised filing fees, and frozen salaries are ubiquitous.

In "States Seek Savings in the Courtroom" (March 31, 2010), William M. Welch writes that justice is not convenient anymore. A number of states have had to close courtrooms, delaying cases to an almost unbearable level. The cuts are unparalleled in American history, and court officials are exhausting all remedies. Ultimately, American citizens are feeling the brunt. Emergency hearings, such as child custody and support matters and protection from abuse orders, are being postponed because of the lessened judicial workforce and vacant courthouses. In Minnesota, any given motion can take "10 weeks to get on a calendar."

Alabama's bordering state, Florida, is also one of the most affected. 280 of Florida's 3,100 court employees have been laid off, and elected court officials have accepted a 2% pay cut. California is the biggest victim, as evidenced by the substantial injury to its largest city's courts. The state has forced Los Angeles to trim \$133 million of its \$800 million court budget, ultimately compelling a 20% reduction in court workers and the closure of 19 courtrooms (with 50 more pending).

The basic problem is that the court system is personnel driven, meaning that any cuts come directly from the workforce. The nation's judiciary has no other means to resort to when dealing with a problematic and unbalanced budget. Unfortunately, Alabama is no different and has undergone this setback before.

Seven years ago, budget cuts, similar to the ones being threatened now, hurt Alabama's judicial system, from which, it has still not yet recovered. In "Bar President Decries Judicial System Budget Cutbacks Would Lead to Crisis in Access to Justice" (January 28, 2010), Alabama State Bar

President Thomas J. Methvin explains that "The court [system] is struggling to overcome those [2003] cuts with many of the discharged employees never having been rehired."

The judiciary, in fact, was the hardest hit state agency during that time ("more than eighty percent of the state employees laid off were in the Judicial Branch"), and any further workforce reduction would be catastrophic. The courts would be nothing more than a shell of themselves, a fraction of the entire system.

Methvin emphasizes two points to combat partiality in the decrease in budget. First, the Judicial Branch is "not an 'agency' of the Executive Branch," but rather, "one of three co-equal branches of state government." As such, the Alabama Constitution mandates that it receive equal treatment with the other two branches of government. Second, "The Judicial Branch should not again be made to suffer such cuts in necessary manpower when other branches of state government are not experiencing similar cuts in staff."

The judiciary has been using progressive approaches to save money such as implementing and utilizing cost-saving technology. Furthermore, Methvin adds that "The Judicial Branch was the first state entity to implement a hiring freeze as well as freezing merit raises for employees" in an effort to comply with the current available budget.

Although budget cuts loom ominously above Alabama courthouses like the rest of the nation, the judiciary and its representatives have fought and continue to fight gallantly to preserve the system and ward off disproportionate cuts. "The Alabama State Bar commends Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb and the entire judiciary for their stand to defend the Judicial Branch from further cuts," Methvin concludes. This cannot be more true as the State's judicial system, led by Chief Justice Cobb, maintains its steadfast and committed stance to ensure justice for its workers and Alabama's citizens.

For the full Bar statement, visit: [http://www.alabar.org/media/news/01282010\\_Access-to-Justice.cfm](http://www.alabar.org/media/news/01282010_Access-to-Justice.cfm)

For the full USA Today article, visit: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-03-31-court-cuts\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-03-31-court-cuts_N.htm)

# Managing Physical Assets of the UJS

by Steve Tomberlin, AOC Records & Property Management

Organizations put a tremendous emphasis on hiring, training, and retaining quality employees. An organization's employees are some of its best assets.

Equally important to organizations are their physical assets, which also require tremendous investment. Physical assets include office furniture, computer equipment, scanners, cameras, networking technological equipment, security devices, and countless other items that enable organizations and their employees to do their jobs or provide their services.

Physical assets enable tasks to be performed more efficiently and effectively, thereby saving time and money. In many cases, physical assets are part of critical systems and infrastructure providing functionality that is not performed by any employees.

Proper management of physical assets is essential to sound fiscal responsibility and overall success of the organization. The purpose of the AOC Property Management Program is to assist Court Officials and employees within the Alabama Unified Judicial System (UJS) in the maintenance and accounting of their physical assets in a fiscally responsible manner. Being accountable and ensuring that our valuable resources are protected is paramount to earning the public's trust that their tax dollars are being used wisely.



## Legal Requirements

State law establishes the rules by which agencies must account for their assets. **Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-16-8**, requires State government agencies to maintain, monitor, and account for all physical assets with an original acquisition cost of \$500 or more throughout the entire life cycle of all items. This code section also requires that every State agency must do annual complete and thorough internal Property Inventory Audit of that agency's physical assets, and submit a report to the State Auditor's Office no later than October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Additionally, this provision of the law requires that the State Auditor's Office perform bi-annual audits of each State agency every other year.

## FY09-10 Inventory Audit

During the past several months the AOC Property Management team has been conducting the most comprehensive Property Inventory Audit ever undertaken in the history of the UJS. Since April of 2009, employees with the AOC Property Management Department have been travelling to each county locating, tagging, updating, and removing unnecessary and obsolete items from the inventory system. While the Property Management team has made significant progress, there is still much work to be done in order to achieve the goal of a perfect audit.

This project is labor intensive, time consuming, and requires great attention to detail. The Property Management team reports regularly to the State Auditor's Office as they monitor our progress. To date, 54 counties have been visited which represents 72% of the total inventory assets within the system.

### AOC Property Management Functions

- Maintain Asset Data in Inventory System
- Provide Bar Code Tagging of all Inventory Items
- Annual Internal Inventory Audit (beginning January of each year)
- Routine and Emergency Surplus Property Pickups
- New Equipment Deliveries as Needed
- Bi-Monthly Surplus Property Disposals at State Surplus Lot



### UJS Property Management Report

(as of April 2010)

**Total Assets (over \$500) - 11,096**

**Total Value of Assets - \$15,126,283.34**

**Total Items Surplused - 865 (FY08-09)**

**Total Value of Items Surplused - \$461,598.71**

### From the Desk of Sam Shaw, State Auditor:

"The Office of the State Auditor is working hard with every department in our State to achieve 'perfect audits.' While 'perfect' means many things to many people, with regard to our property audits, 'perfect' has just one meaning. Departments achieve a 'perfect audit' when every item assigned to the department is accounted for by the time our State Audit Inventory Officer (SAIO) completes their portion of the audit. If items are input into the Protégé database correctly and tagged with bar codes and property numbers, perfect audits should be achievable by every department. Attention to detail and commitment to responsible use of taxpayer money make the 'perfect audit' not only desirable but also expected. When policies and procedures are in place and followed, and property is tracked throughout its life cycle, agencies should receive a perfect audit."

....."all State employees should be mindful of the responsibility they have to uphold the public trust and strive to maintain that level of trust through dedication, professionalism, and accountability. I am proud of the efforts of so many employees in agencies who have achieved 'perfection,' and I want to support and encourage those who are striving to achieve a higher level of accountability." Sam Shaw, State Auditor



## Employee Recognition Program Employee Years of State Service for March 2010

We would like to recognize the following **Employees** who have reached a milestone in their career with the **State of Alabama** by attaining the mentioned years of state service (in **5** year increments only).

Please direct any questions regarding **State Years of Service** to Lisa Gilliland at (334) 954-5103 or email her at [Lisa.Gilliland@alacourt.gov](mailto:Lisa.Gilliland@alacourt.gov).



### Name

### Years

### County

Pamela D. Haynes	30	Calhoun
Brenda F. Brown	30	Tuscaloosa
Deborah H. Cummings	30	Morgan
Deborah C. Hudson	25	Butler
Melanie H. Garner	25	Tallapoosa
Lee M. Monroe	25	Talladega
Pamela D. Taylor	20	Limestone
Hon. Eugene W. Reese	20	Montgomery
Janet A. Mann	20	Shelby
John W. Winston Jr.	20	Lauderdale
Cheryl D. Lenoir	20	AOC
Yvette L. Bae	20	Houston
Shirley A. Phillips	20	Mobile
Carolyn C. Walden	20	Marshall
Connie G. McMinn	20	Cullman
Sunee P. Cates	15	Jefferson
Vickie A. Mizzell	15	Shelby

### Name

### Years

### County

Connie S. McLain	15	Jackson
Lamia S. Hubbard	10	Madison
Susan E. Green	10	Montgomery
Kathryn W. Sharpe	10	Covington
Tanya T. Robinson	10	AOC
Carol M. Jackson	05	Baldwin
Chiandra M. Thomas	05	AOC
Jennifer G. Clevenger	05	Calhoun
Nancy M. Guffey	05	DeKalb
Richard E. Fiore	05	AOC
Cynthia L. Wooten	05	AOC
Nancy L. Tillman	05	Mobile
Quavelyn C. Coleman	05	Perry
Karen B. Lowery	05	Shelby
Hon. Dennis E. Odell	05	Madison
Karla M. Mann	05	Madison



**Happy Birthday to  
everyone who is  
Celebrating a Birthday in  
April!!!**



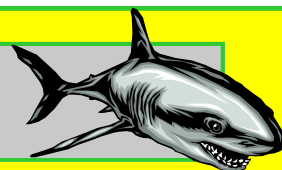
## LIFE BEFORE THE COMPUTER

- Memory was something that you lost with age
- An application was for employment
- A program was a TV show
- A cursor was someone who used profanity
- A keyboard was on a piano
- A virus was the flu
- A CD was a bank account
- A hard drive was a long trip on the road
- A mousepad was where a mouse lived





# S.H.A.R.K.



## TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AREAS

SJIS HELPDESK

IT SUPPORT

PC HELPDESK

HUMAN RESOURCES

MIDAS

OTHER

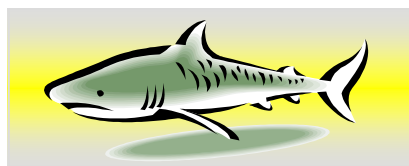
### S.H.A.R.K. (Service, Helpdesk Assistance, Repair & Knowledge)

The Administrative Office of Courts is proud to announce **S.H.A.R.K.**, our new Helpdesk Trouble Ticketing system. Using **S.H.A.R.K.** to enter trouble tickets to AOC will eliminate the need for calling or sending emails to the individual Technology Support Areas.

**S.H.A.R.K.** is web-based and can be accessed using your Windows username (first name dot last name) and password (12 or more character). From any web browser, please go to <http://SHARK.alacourt.gov> to submit a ticket to AOC.

PLEASE SELECT THE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AREA THAT BEST RELATES TO YOUR ISSUE

<input type="radio"/> <b>SJIS HELPDESK:</b> PASSPORT, ZEPHYR, ACCESS, ATTORNEY CODE CHANGES, MAINFRAME AND BONDING COMPANY CODES	<input type="radio"/> <b>IT SUPPORT:</b> ALAFILE, ALACOURTPLUS, ALAVault, ALAPAY, EAPPELLATE, ECITATIONS (eSEARCH AND ESWEAR), ETRANSCRIPTS, DA APPLICATIONS, JUVENILE APPLICATIONS (PROBATION AND DETENTION) AND AOC NEWSLETTER
<input type="radio"/> <b>PC HELPDESK:</b> PC, SCANNER OR PRINTER EQUIPMENT REQUESTS, HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE, EMAIL SUPPORT, ACCOUNT RESETS AND EFORMS SUPPORT	<input type="radio"/> <b>MIDAS:</b> MODEL INTEGRATED DEFENDANT ACCESS SYSTEM
<input type="radio"/> <b>OTHER</b>	<input type="radio"/> <b>HUMAN RESOURCES:</b> HR DESKTOP, PAYROLL AND RECRUITMENT/TESTING



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS

## shark

Service, Helpdesk Assistance, Repair & Knowledge

Microsoft Internet Explorer 7+ required to view this site

ALAC LOGIN LOGIN

USER NAME:

PASSWORD:

Login

VERSION 4.0 BETA 2.0.0  
DATE: 10/25/2008 10:45:10 AM

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